

**SB 384 – Allowing ambulances in rural communities to operate with only the minimum personnel required by state law.**

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**Proponent Testimony**

Chairman Bergquist and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 384 as it appears before you today.

The Emergency Medical Services Board is the lead EMS agency in our state responsible for protecting the public through the effective oversight of all things EMS related in Kansas; this includes ambulance services, ambulances, EMS providers, and EMS educational entities. We have been tirelessly providing guidance, input, and support to our 170 EMS agencies across the state of Kansas as we remain in close and frequent contact with them to attempt to identify and address challenges as early as possible.

The language of SB 384 before you today is the product of a collaborative effort between the parties responsible for introduction of the bill and our Board. It affords the Board the ability to continue to study the need and appropriateness for further legislation related to the staffing of ambulances and to perform the study in a controlled manner. This study is able to be done through a process currently authorized for us through the Legislature who has granted us the discretionary authority to approve variances from identified rules and regulations when certain conditions exist, the biggest conditions being a hardship exists and the relief does not violate state statute.

We currently have seven Kansas ambulance services having received, or are in the process of receiving, a variance related specifically to ambulance staffing. Those seven services are the City of Washington EMS, Miltonvale EMS, Clifton City Ambulance, Waterville Ambulance Service, Norwich EMS, Ottawa County Fire District #4, and Concordia Fire Department. All seven services have only requested the variance for a 12-month period at this point. This variance is a tremendous tool allowing the service to continue to work on recruitment and retention while maintaining compliance with law and maintaining ambulance service to their respective communities.

SB 384, as it was originally introduced, was full of flaws and unintended consequences. The Board appreciates the collaborative work with the League of Municipalities in identifying and understanding those flaws and unintended consequences, and in developing and proposing the amendments ultimately made and approved within the Senate. The product of that work appears before you today and with our support.

As offered to the Senate Committee on Local Government, we are also happy to provide you and your committee with updates upon the variance process and the services requesting them for this purpose. This is a study with the overarching goal being to provide strong evidence to support any future legislative request related to appropriate staffing of an ambulance during transport while ensuring the public is not placed at an undue increased risk. SB 384, in its current form, allows us to safely proceed towards this goal.

We support the enactment of SB 384 as it appears before you today and we urge your support as well.